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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005183

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#) [CY](#) [EU](#)

SUBJECT: THE POST-GYMNICH VIEW FROM ANKARA: TURKS MAY GRUDGINGLY ACCEPT CURRENT COUNTER-DECLARATION TEXT

REF: A. 1 SEPTEMBER 2005 SKINNER/BLAHA ET AL. E-MAIL

[1](#)B. 2 SEPTEMBER 2005 TURNER/BLAHA ET AL. E-MAIL

(U) Classified by CDA Nancy McEldowney, E.O. 12958, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: GOT officials express differing degrees of displeasure with the draft text of an EU counter-declaration to the July 29 Turkish declaration of non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC). In the end, the Turks will probably accept it if the text does not vary from the current draft (ref a). The Turkish MFA is not/not currently contemplating a "counter-counter-declaration." The counter-declaration text could help the UK avoid significant changes to the Negotiating Framework, the next Turkey/EU point of contention. Changes to the current Framework text on "open-ended" negotiations or "privileged partnership" would cross Turkish redlines. The Turks need to keep up their moderate rhetoric, avoiding the sensitive issue of opening ports and airports to the ROC; focus on substantive issues the EU cares most about; and not threaten to boycott the opening of negotiations. CDA meets MFA U/S Tuygan September 7 for his readout. End Summary.

Reactions to Proposed Counter-Declaration

[1](#)2. (C) GOT officials express differing degrees of displeasure with the draft EU counter-declaration to the July 29 Turkish declaration of non-recognition of the ROC. The Brits here recounted an emotional September 2 meeting between FM Gul and Foreign Secretary Straw. FM Gul said he could not sell the EU text in Turkey and it could derail the process. However, according to the Brits, when PM Erdogan and Gul spoke by phone after the meeting, Erdogan told Gul he did not think the counter-declaration language was offensive. The UK Ambassador is convinced the Turks will accept it in the end if it does not change significantly.

[1](#)3. (C) In our meetings, some GOT officials have not been as negative as Gul. MFA EU DDG Turkmen was not happy with the text and said Turkey will try to change it, but added Turkey would grudgingly accept it. Deputy SecGen of the GOT's EU Affairs Secretariat Acet did not appear very concerned about the current text, saying it "merely stated the facts."

[1](#)4. (C) MFA Northeastern Mediterranean Affairs DDG Bilman, who accompanied Gul to the Gymnich, gave us a significantly more downbeat assessment. He told us Gul is "disturbed" by language emphasizing the importance the EU attaches to "de jure normalization of relations between Turkey and all EU Member States" because he believes it could amount to recognition of the ROC. The Brits confirm that Gul emphasized this point to Straw. "I cannot emphasize enough how big this is," Bilman added. However, Bilman did not say that this could derail the process.

[1](#)5. (C) Bilman and Turkmen both told us Turkey is not/not contemplating a "counter-counter-declaration."

[1](#)6. (C) According to UK Ankara Embassy, the counter-declaration text will be the main topic at the September 7 COREPER; the UK hopes to finalize it then. Although the UK will try to hold the line, the UK thinks the text could get tougher.

"De Jure Normalization": How to Waffle Recognition?

[1](#)7. (C) Gul and our contacts argue there is no difference between "de jure normalization" and recognition. In his meeting with Gul, Straw pushed back, reminding Gul this was compromise text to avoid "the R word" and that the EU is not demanding recognition now. According to the Brits, the UK Presidency may be able to substitute an alternate German text to the effect that "EU membership presupposes recognition of all Member States," which the UK assesses as more "sellable" to the Turks.

"Constructive Ambiguity" on Implementation

[1](#)8. (C) The Turks are also resisting any text on "implementation" requiring them to open their ports and

airports to the ROC. This is extremely difficult politically when Turkish Cypriot ports and airports remain closed, and the EU proposal for direct trade with the "TRNC" languishes due to ROC objections. According to DDG Bilman, "TRNC President" Talat is very upset at the prospect of opening ports and airports.

19. (C) For the Turks, any timetable or deadline for opening ports and airports is an EU deal-breaker. However, Bilman told us he "might be able to sell" language to the effect that this issue will be resolved with existing Customs Union mechanisms. Bilman and UK Deputy Head of Mission Roberts believe this process will delay the matter long enough to give the GOT breathing room to accept it.

110. (C) In the short run, the UK Presidency is hoping to get to October 3 with "constructive ambiguity" on the ports and airports issue. They want the Turks to reaffirm their intention to fully implement the Customs Union extension protocol; avoid public statements about ports and airports; and if pushed, say they will be guided in implementation by the Council and Commission legal services. This papers over the crucial differences in timing and puts off the debate for another day -- after October 3.

111. (C) But the UK worries that public statements by Turkish officials about not opening ports and airports increase the chances of more specific -- and for the Turks, worse -- language in either the counter-declaration or Negotiating Framework. Gul made such a statement before he left for the Gymnich, but Straw pressed him on this point and Gul has not repeated it.

Worries About "Review"

112. (C) The Turks are also worried about the "review" mechanism referred to in the draft counter-declaration text. DDG Bilman interprets this as a "deadline" for Turkey to open ports and airports; Turkmen expressed concern this might become a condition for continuing accession negotiations. The UK Ambassador here believes the latter point is the core Turkish concern about the review mechanism. To the extent the Turks can be reassured this is indeed "no more than a review" (ref b), with no new conditions, they would accept it. According to Turkmen, if the review merely results in a negative reference in the annual EU progress report, Turkey can live with it.

The GOT Looks to "Save the Framework"

113. (C) According to their Ankara Embassy, the UK is not certain the negotiating framework will be discussed on September 7, but this is the next Turkey/EU point of contention. According to MFA EU DDG Turkmen, who brushed off the counter-declaration, the GOT priority is to "save the Framework." The GOT wants to keep Cyprus-related language in the counter-declaration out of the Framework. The UK is urging the Turks to accept tough counter-declaration language, in part, in hopes of keeping it out of the Framework, but the UK cannot guarantee this.

114. (C) The Turks remain extremely sensitive to any new, broader language on "open-ended" negotiations or "privileged partnership." EU Secretariat Deputy SecGen Acet called this a Turkish "redline"; MFA DDG Turkmen said this would be cause for Turkey to walk away from negotiations. Even DDG Bilman, normally focused only on Cyprus, called it an invitation to "second-class citizen status."

115. (C) Over the last several days, Gul and Erdogan have both publicly threatened that Turkey will abandon EU accession in the event of new conditions or a proposal for anything short of full membership. Most Turkish commentators from across the political spectrum welcomed Gul's and Erdogan's remarks. However, the Embassy here tells us the UK worries that such rhetoric will help Turkey's EU opponents. The UK thinks the Turks should focus instead on issues the EU cares about: the Orhan Pamuk case, religious freedom, the foundations law.

116. (C) Comment: At this stage, the EU should know where Turkish redlines are. As long as the EU does not insert into the Framework specific language that will provoke the GOT, Turkey's candidacy should reach October 3 leaking, but afloat. Even so, the run up to October 3 illustrates that the Cyprus issue will plague the process for years to come.
End Comment.
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